

The Claims:

1. (Presently Amended) A method of instant messaging, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of messaging clients capable of transmitting instant messages to one another;

each of the plurality of messaging clients configured to share presence information with one another via a network through a presence server, the presence server maintaining a state table entry for each of the messaging clients indicating either one of a plurality of known states when the server is aware of the present state of the messaging client or an unknown state when the server is not aware of the present state of the messaging client; and

for each of the plurality of messaging clients, the presence server (a) accessing the state table entries to determine whether a messaging client is in a first known state in which it is receptive to receiving presence information from the other messaging clients or whether the messaging client is in the unknown state, (b) if the messaging client is in the first known state, then transmitting presence information from the other messaging clients to the messaging client via the network, and (c) if the messaging client is in the unknown state, then inhibiting the transmission of presence information from the other messaging clients to the messaging client until the state table entry for the messaging client transitions to the first known state

~~determining whether the messaging client is in a state in which it is receptive to receiving presence information from the other messaging clients, and if so, then receiving presence information for each of the other messaging clients via the network.~~

2. (Presently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

for each of the plurality of messaging clients, the presence server setting a communication timer to a predetermined value that, when expired, will put the messaging client into ~~an~~ the unknown state if no communications are received at the presence server from the messaging client before the timer expires ~~in which it is not receptive to receiving presence information from each of the other messaging clients.~~

3. (Presently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

for each of the plurality of messaging clients, detecting a trigger signal indicating that the messaging client should be put into ~~an~~ the unknown state and thereafter ceasing all communications with the presence server ~~in which it is not receptive to receiving presence information from each of the other messaging clients.~~

4. (Presently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting presence information directly from each of the plurality of messaging clients to the other messaging clients ~~without using an intermediate server.~~

5. (Cancel)

6. (Presently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

each of the plurality of messaging clients having a buddy list of other messaging clients with which the messaging client is interested in communicating with;

when the messaging client is in a the first known state in which it is receptive to receiving presence information, then obtaining presence information from the presence server for each of the other messaging clients on the buddy list.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network is a wide area wireless network.

8. (Cancel)

9. (Cancel)

10. (Cancel)

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting instant messages between two of the messaging clients having presence information regarding one another.

12. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the trigger signal is generated when an instant messaging application is turned off.

13. (Cancel)

14-24 (Cancel)

25. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

after step (c), detecting a communication from the messaging client at the presence server and in response thereto, transitioning the state table entry for the messaging client from the unknown state to a known state.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the known state is the first known state in which the messaging client is receptive to receiving presence information from the other messaging clients.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of detecting that the messaging client has transitioned from the unknown state to the first known state and in response thereto, transmitting presence information for the other messaging clients to the messaging client.

28. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

as long as the messaging client is in the first known state, the presence server periodically transmitting presence information from the other messaging clients to the messaging client;

the presence server receiving an indication from the network that a periodic transmission of the presence information has not been successfully delivered to the messaging client; and

inhibiting the periodic transmission of presence information to the messaging client until the network indicates that the messaging client is once again able to receive transmissions.